

# Local Trail Group Helps with Grant Project <sup>108</sup>

The Ankeny-Woodward trail group has applied to become an Iowa Great Place pilot project in combination with Jester Park, Saylorville Lake and Big Creek State Park. The trail group includes Boone, Dallas, Polk and Story Counties and

their conservation boards; the cities of Madrid, Woodward, Slater, Sheldahl and Ankeny; and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

The trail group and the lakes/parks group started out working separately but were encour-

aged by the state to think bigger and combine, and the result was a regional effort called the Des Moines River Valley Region: Woodward to Yellow Banks. The group made a presentation on Tuesday, Sept. 20 to members and staff of the Great Places

## Citizen Advisory Board.

The Iowa Great Places program is a new state initiative intended to promote "bold thought, innovation and entrepreneurship to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities that make places in Iowa so special." The goal is to combine government resources in a one-stop shop for state programs, helping Iowans find the services that fit their place and their vision, and walking them through the process to access those programs. The resources provided may include grants and technical assistance that are tailored to local needs.

According to Becky Roorda,

Madrid Friends, of the Trail Member, they received a lot of assistance in their presentation from individuals and businesses in the Madrid area. "We used several mining artifacts from the Madrid Historical Museum, the Madrid Register-News provided a photo of the Des Moines River bridge piers which became the overall theme of the presentation, Mid-National Graphics provided a large sign for the entrance to our presentation, Northern Prairie Chevre provided cheese samples and a display, and the City of Madrid provided copying for 16 copies of a 32-page notebook of information for the Citizen Advisory Board members and staff," stated Roorda.

She continued, "We are very excited about the possibility of continuing to work together to

promote the region. We have a lot of great resources and events in the area, but we can do much more to promote and provide information about them within the region and to people from other places. We hope to expand our regional efforts to include more of the many parks and areas of interest in Boone County, but we simply ran out of time to bring in new partners before the state deadline. As we continue to work together, we plan to do this."

The program's Citizen Advisory Board will select three pilot projects as Great Places Pilot Projects. Pilot projects will be announced on Tuesday, Oct. 11 at a conference in Iowa City.



Becky Roorda and Lisa Hein are pictured before their 'Iowa Great Places' presentation.

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**The Iowa Great Places advisory board was treated to a horse-drawn wagon ride through Jester Park.**



**Carol Williams from the Story County Conservation board was the "conductor" at the Iowa Great Places presentation.**